

FLEX Flex News OPTIONS

January 2010
Issue 3

FLEX-NEWS: A PROJECT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WOMEN'S BUREAU

REGISTER NOW:

January 14,
Free Flex-Options Teleconference
2:00 – 3:00
“Best Practices in the New Year”
1-888-322-3039
Pass Code: Flex-Options

The presenters for the teleconference include:

Danette Campbell, Senior Telework Advisor, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Recently, the USPTO was recognized for “Best Use of Innovation and Technology to Support Telework” by Telework Exchange. All USPTO business units have telework initiatives in place. Telework at USPTO has been successful by starting small, providing pilot programs, incorporating measurable performance standards and expectations regarding solid customer service, providing clear guidelines and by securing employee input (www.uspto.gov)

Shirley Crews Taylor, Director, Flexible Workplace Initiative, City of Houston. The outgoing Mayor Bill White’s Flexible Workplace Initiative has been recognized globally, especially for its innovative “Flex in the City” program. Shirley will provide an update on “Flex in the City” and how it is encouraging Houston employers to adopt flexible work options to reduce commuting during peak travel times. (www.houstontx.gov/flexworks)

Laura Schoppe, President, Fuentek. Laura’s consulting firm provides intellectual property and technology management services. Drawing upon its unique combination of technical, business and commercialization expertise, the firm is the largest NASA contractor in North Carolina and has helped organizations around the world find the technology they need. Fuentek’s workforce is virtual, and develops their own schedules. Laura will share some of her best practices and innovations for running such a flexible organization while providing excellent service to the firm’s clients. (www.fuentek.com)

You will have the opportunity to participate and ask questions during a facilitated Q&A session immediately following the presentations. Hope you can join us!

You may register online for this teleconference at:
http://webapps.dol.gov/wb/flex_ssl.asp

Teleconference Transcript and Summary Available

On November 12, 2009 the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, hosted an informative teleconference featuring the [Returnships@Sara Lee program](http://Returnships@SaraLee.org). Featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Forbes*, and on *NBC's Today*, this program offers an innovative recruitment approach that uses flexibility to attract experienced, mid-career individuals who have taken a break from paid employment. Returnships@Sara Lee is designed to provide opportunities for individuals to re-engage with the corporate world through flexibility and meaningful work, while also “testing the waters” prior to pursuing permanent roles. Participants also have access to relevant business, industry, job-specific, and technology education.

Mark Demich, Sara Lee's Vice President, Organizational Development and Global Diversity, and Kathy Bayert, Senior Manager, Organizational Effectiveness provided a comprehensive overview of this unique and highly publicized program. To access the written transcript of the teleconference.,

For all previous teleconference transcripts, please visit the [Flex-Options Project Events Section](#) on our Website. The Flex-Options project has hosted 29 content-rich teleconferences, which include practical information and tips for employees, organizations, human resource professionals and employees.

[The Regional Offices of the Women's Bureau](#) play a critical role in the success of *Flex-Options*. They serve on the front lines helping employers and organizations implement and improve workplace flexibility programs. They also work closely with the business community, government entities and other key partners to host events and forums that educate and spur dialog about ways to accelerate the adoption of workplace flexibility. Please visit the [Flex-Options Website](#) to learn more about local events and the [Women's Bureau site](#) for contact information.

Region VIII Women's Bureau Office Spotlights Planning Tool That Help Forecast Workplace/Transportation Needs

In December 2009, The Denver Regional Council of Government (DRCOG), the Flex Options Women's Bureau contractor for Region VIII, sponsored a presentation for transportation and green communities. Jill Locanture, Planning Communications Specialist for DRCOG, was the featured speaker on the agenda. At the beginning of her presentation, she posed three questions to help facilitate discussion:

- What will the Denver region look like in the year 2040?
- How can the metro area accommodate millions of new people and jobs?
- How might different development patterns and infrastructure investments influence quality of people and jobs?

In response to the three questions, DRCOG discussed a tool they developed called Metro Quest. The tool allows policy makers, business leaders and the general public to explore these questions by visualizing alternative future scenarios for the region. The value of this tool in part demonstrates that as the population increases and living areas become denser, there will be an increased need for flexible work policies like telecommuting and flexible schedules to reduce transportation and our carbon footprint. (cont. on page 9)

The online version of Metro Quest allows users to select different policy options for the region such as rail line expansion or highway widening and then explore the future they have created. It can be accessed at <http://denverregion.metroquest.com>. The workshop version has many more maps and graphs to view as well as the benefit of a live facilitator to answer questions. The live workshops use handheld keypads so that groups can create impromptu scenarios together and then discuss different issues. For more information, including presentations, polling results and future scenarios from previous workshops, visit www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=MetroQuest.

Marzy Bedford-Billinghurst, a WB Program Analyst, commented on the value of the tool specifically as it relates to transportation: "As a light rail rider, it makes sense to expand the light rail system to not only reduce traffic and emissions but to increase the option for more people to work flexible schedules."

WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY IN THE NEWS



TOP 10 WORK LIFE CULTURE STORIES OF 2009

Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist Judy Martin, has emerged as a reporter and public speaker who gives an objective voice to social concerns, business news and the delicate balance of living and working with purpose, in an era of great uncertainty and chaos. She recently compiled a list of Top Work Life Culture Stories, including workplace flexibility. Recession, record high unemployment, women comprising half of the workforce and healthcare reform thrust work-life effectiveness into the headlines. Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist Judy Martin, compiled her list of influential work life stories of 2009 on her [WorkLife Nation](http://www.worklifenation.com) site including:

- The Obama Administration takes on Work and Families
 - [White House Task Force on Middle Class Working](#)
 - [Families First Lady Speaks](#) at Corporate Voices for Working Families' Annual Meeting
- The Work Life Gender Gap Narrows
 - Data from [Families and Work Institute](#) found that men's work-life conflict increased significantly from 34% in 1997 to 45% in 2008
 - Adecco Group North America's American Workplace Insights Survey released in September 2009 found that one in four working Dads were working longer hours/took a second job to keep up with economic pressure
- [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009](#)
- [The Shriver Report](#): A Women's Nation Changes Everything
- Edward M. Kennedy [Serve America Act](#)
- U.S. lags other rich countries in supporting working families
 - Findings of researchers at Harvard and McGill Universities published in a new book: [Raising the Global Floor: Dismantling the Myth that We Can't Afford Good Working Conditions for Everyone](#)
- Work Life Flexibility: The New Normal
 - Workplace Flexibility 2010 releases its [Public Policy Platform for Flexible Work Arrangements](#) and spurs a litany of public discourse and debate about the benefits of flexible work arrangements and spurs a litany of public discourse and debate about the benefits of flexible work arrangements



WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY IN THE NEWS



- The Digital Work Life Native
 - Kelly Services releases the [Kelly Global Workforce Index](#) finding that technology has improved work-life balance, productivity and engagement
- The Multi-Generational Workforce has an upside
 - [MetLife's Employee Engagement study](#)
 - The Sloan Center on Aging and Work at Boston College's [Staying "Age-Responsive" in a Climate of new Organizational Challenges](#)
- H1N1 and [The State of Health in the American Workforce](#)
 - This Families and Work Institute report reveals a decline in the health of the American workforce and confirms criteria for an effective workplace
 - H1N1 results in a review of family leave, the Healthy Families Act, Family Leave Insurance Act, and work-life flexibility

SHRM REPORT ON WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

In June 2009, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) released a report, "[Workplace Flexibility in the 21st Century: Meeting the Needs of the Changing Workforce](#)." The study polled Human Resource professionals and found that formal Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) have a positive impact on employees and employers. 68% believe the quality of employees' personal and family life is affected positively as a result of implementing FWAs

91% said they believe implementation of formal FWAs had a positive impact on employee morale, specifically job satisfaction and engagement

89% indicated that employee retention was affected positively by the implementing of FWAs

Companies with formal FWAs said their telecommuters' productivity is up and their absenteeism is down.



In Case You Missed It: What Virginia Saved with "Telework Day"

A report provided to Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine showed that Virginian's who participated in "Telework Day" last August saved approximately \$113,000, avoided driving 140,000 miles and removed 75.89 tons of pollutants from the air. "The results are clear – telework plays an important role in meeting the Commonwealth's green objectives, reducing strain and traffic on our roads, increasing savings for our employees, and will provide our businesses with increased employee productivity," said Governor Kaine.

The report, developed by the public-private partnership [Telework Exchange](#), found that if all eligible employees teleworked one day per week for a year, teleworkers in the Commonwealth would collectively avoid driving 602 million miles, remove 360,800 tons of pollutants from the air, and save \$807 million in commuting costs. Over the course of a year this would equal a \$1,822 annual raise for every teleworker in Virginia, and save 46 hours a year in commuting.

WORKING MOTHER 100 BEST FLEX

[“Mastering the Art of a Flexible Culture”](#) is a new study sponsored by Procter & Gamble, *Working Mother* and Flex-Paths. The 36-page report profiles seven of the “100 Best Companies for Working Mothers” – Procter & Gamble, CISCO Systems, IBM, American Express, Citi, Ernst & Young and Deloitte. Glimpses into how each company approaches flexibility are included in the report, along with the following tips for success:

- Align with internal partners, such as facilities planning and IT as they can be powerful catalysts for promoting the flex agenda
- Leverage technology to facilitate flexible work, build skills among both managers and employees, and communicate about policies and opportunities
- Experiment and evolve your unique brand of flexibility, adding new approaches based on your core business, culture and language
- Establish measurements to show the return on investment of flexibility
- Communicate, communicate, communicate



The report also includes findings from the 2009 100 Best Companies for Working Mothers, including:

- 98% of the “100 Best” leaders promote or use flex options themselves and future leaders are drawn from a pool that includes people who work flexibly
- 87% feature flex in corporate objectives, mission, vision and values statements
- 94% say flexibility is essential to their business strategy (more than just an employee accommodation)
- Flex is connected to other business objectives – to organizational change (94%), sustainability/ environmental strategies (86%), disaster planning (75%), and facilities planning (74%)
- Flex is included in such business processes as hiring leaders (98%), diversity and inclusion (91%), leadership development (90%), and training (87%).

HOUSTON’S FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE INITIATIVE

The Flex-Options program has previously profiled Houston Mayor Bill White’s successful and innovative Flex in the City program which asks Houston area employers to adopt at least one new flexible work option to eliminate commuting during peak travel time for a trial two-week period. The [Houston Flexible Workplace Initiative](#) has designed a comprehensive Website with information on best practices and plenty of free resources to help employers implement more flexible workplace cultures. For example, their [Toolkit](#) offers information on:

- Building the business case
- Assessing current workplace culture
- Identifying the types of jobs that flex successfully
- Determining the type of employee attributes that lead to successful flexing
- Understanding the skills needed to manage in a flexible work environment
- Identifying how to measure productivity
- Communicating the program, goals and measures to managers and employees
- Understanding common misperceptions of flexibility and how to avoid the pitfalls



Other resources on the site include a Flexworks eNewsletter, supporting legislation, studies, and links to other Websites with helpful information.



FLEXIBLE RIGHTSIZING: A COST EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO LAYOFFS

A group of work-life experts from Accenture, Alliance for Work-Life Progress at WorldatWork, FlexPaths, Roundtree Consulting, WFD Consulting, and Work+Life Fit has created the [Flexible Rightsizing Cost/Benefit Analysis Tool](#). This resource is designed to help HR managers guide their leadership to make the most appropriate decisions about reducing costs while preserving the talent required for enterprise success. Examples of Flexible Rightsizing techniques include furloughs, reduced work weeks, sabbaticals, telework, pay cuts, and team approaches to cost reduction. The tool is designed to help HR managers and business owners estimate a variety of “subterranean” costs and benefits, but it can also serve as the basis for opening and sustaining a dialogue with management on the best ways to reduce labor costs while optimizing morale, productivity and health outcomes in unusually trying times.

COMPANIES PUSH FOR FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES TO BOOST WOMEN ATTORNEYS

“Del Monte is one of a dozen major corporations involved in an initiative to boost the number of women and minorities in top law firm positions by adding part-time and flexible working schedules to the list of things they require of outside counsel. The initiative, spearheaded by the [Project for Attorney Retention and dubbed the Diversity & Flexibility Connection](#), seeks to help legal departments and law firms support flexible working schedules and ensure that part-time attorneys – mostly women – have meaningful work and important roles within their firms. The hope is that greater work flexibility and acceptance of part-time schedules will help stem the tide of women and minorities leaving law firms. In turn, greater retention will create a larger pool of women and minorities to promote to partnership.” (Karen Sloan, [www.law.com](#), *The National Law Journal*, December 3, 2009)

WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY....FOR BABY BOOMERS

Abbott Laboratories offers an innovative flexibility program for older workers who don't want to retire, or are unable to do so, but desire a little more time off. [“Freedom to Work”](#) offers employees age 55 and older with two options:

Custom Schedule Program, which allows employees to reduce hours and pay/bonus without impacting benefits. This option allows employees to work four days a week all year or take up to an additional five weeks of vacation.

Emeritus Program, which allows employees to change their responsibility (e.g., from managing staff to an individual contributor) without reducing their pay or grade.



Employees who participate continue to receive 401(k) contributions at the same percentage of their prior full salaries and pension calculations are protected so workers can attain more years of service at their highest pay level.

CORPORATE VOICES AND WORKING MOTHER MEDIA SPOTLIGHT CONGRESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

For the second year Corporate Voices for Working Families and Working Mother Media will present U.S. Senators and members of the U.S. House of Representatives with the [Best of Congress award](#), recognizing their leadership in improving the quality of life for working families by partnering with business to create long-term solutions to work-life issues. Winners will be profiled in the August/September 2010 issue of *Working Mother* magazine. Members of Congress are invited to apply (the questionnaire can be accessed by [clicking here](#)) and will be judged on their voting record, sponsored/co-sponsored legislation, and efforts to promote legislation that supports working families. In addition, applicants will be asked to submit policies and practices within their own offices that support their employees and flexible workplace options. January 15, 2010 is the deadline for submissions. Applications will be reviewed by a bipartisan steering committee, and awards will be presented to winning members of Congress at an awards breakfast in September 2010 in Washington, D.C.

MIND MATTERS: IN DEFENSE OF DOWNTIME

A 4-year study by professor Leslie Perlow and research associate Jessica Porter, both of the Harvard Business School, published in the October issue of [Harvard Business Review](#), demonstrates that time off can have a larger, positive effect on individual and organizational productivity than more hours on the job. They looked at the impact of “predictable time off” on employees of the Boston Consulting Group, an international consulting firm comprised of consultants, bankers, accountants, lawyers, and IT professionals. During designated periods, even some periods of high work demand, employees were *required* to take time off. For example, in one experiment they were required to take at least one day off

in the middle of the workweek regardless of the pressures of their jobs. Another experience mandated they could not work (including checking email and voice mail) past 6:00 p.m. on one night each week. Initially, employees and their supervisors were anxious and resisted the changes. But the results of the study were overwhelmingly positive: greater job satisfaction, improved communication, greater trust and respect for colleagues, increased learning and self-development, better products for the firm's clients, and a better work/life balance. ([Irene S. Levine, Science Careers, December 4, 2009](#))



CEA STUDY: "TELEWORK ON THE RISE"

An October 2009 Consumer Electronic Association study found that two in five employed U.S. adults work from home at least one day a month. Highlights of the study include:

- Top reasons provided by teleworkers for working at home are "focusing on tasks without disruptions" and "running a business from home."
- Top benefits include flexible hours, reduced travel time and costs, fewer disruptions and greater productivity.
- Teleworkers are purchasing, or providing, their own technology equipment to work from home. "Only 34 percent have access to an employer-provided computer or other IT technology."
- Teleworkers "plan to spend at least \$925 over the next year on technology products to help them work from home."

Source: TMCNet.com, "[Telework on the Rise: Study](#)"

BLOGS AND NEWS BITS FEATURING FLEXIBILITY



[The Wall Street Journal's "Real Time Economics" blog reports](#) on proceedings from an American Economic Association meeting in Atlanta, GA where a Harvard economist asked "Why are there are so many women Veterinarians?" In general, women are trading pay to get workplace flexibility and are being drawn to professions that offer this, according to the blog item. As for veterinarians, Harvard economist Claudia Goldin says: "Small animal clinics open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., six days a week, with no evening and no emergency hours have proliferated. Being a veterinarian has prestige, equivalent to that of a physician. Like some physicians there is considerable room for part-time and flexible work. The training period is less than that for doctors."

[TA December 11, 2009 BusinessWeek.com piece](#) outlines several questions that a business should ask when setting up a telecommuting policy. The questions focus on how telecommuting achieves operations goals, how it fits into your values and whether your company has the infrastructure to support telecommuting.

[A December 10 news item](#) on the CSO, *Security and Risk* website reports on a [Telework Exchange](#) study, which contends "many organizations have an inflated sense of confidence about just how seamless it will be to allow staff to telecommute if the need should arise." The research finds that "81 percent of government and business IT decision makers have written business continuity plans, but both sectors report implementation challenges and lack assurances that employees could work remotely during an emergency."

Free Resources: Model Practices and How-to's in Workplace Flexibility

FLEX-OPTIONS PROGRAM

Through its [Flex-Options](#) program (www.flexoptions.org), the [U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau](#) has become a leading resource for helping employers and organizations implement and improve workplace flexibility programs. The project has helped more than 800 organizations – employing nearly 1.2 million people – create more flexible workplaces. The program has helped businesses launch 2,000 workplace flexibility practices. Working with business leaders across the nation, Flex-Options has hosted more than 400 flexibility workshops and events. The bi-monthly teleconferences have drawn 4,500 participants from nearly all 50 states. With timely and practical resources, the Flex-Options Website receives an average of 20,000 monthly

visitors. Please visit the [Flex-Options Website](#) today to learn more about model practices, review summaries and transcripts of informative teleconferences, and access resources to help you implement and manage workplace flexibility options.

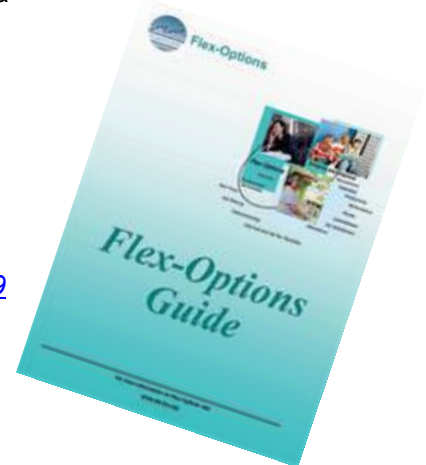
[FLEX-OPTIONS GUIDE](#)

The second edition *Flex-Options Guide* is a popular, free tool developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. The updated Guide covers the latest information about workplace flexibility, and new model practices to help business leaders, managers and employees develop and implement flexible workplace solutions. The Guide spells out flexibility definitions, benefits and common approaches. It also shares tools to get started and includes templates so companies can easily create guidelines for flextime, compressed work weeks, job sharing, part-time work and telecommuting. The Guide also includes "Manager Tips: The Fundamentals of Creating a Flexible Workplace" and "Reviewing and Implementing a Proposal." Employees will find tips for considering and proposing a flexible work arrangement.

[GUIDE TO BOLD NEW IDEAS MAKING WORK](#)

In a time of high unemployment and widespread cost cutting, a surprising number of organizations around the country are raising the bar in developing effective and flexible workplace practices. Hundreds of these ideas are captured in the free [2009 Guide to Bold New Ideas for Making Work Work](#), compiled by the Families and Work Institute (FWI).

Despite the recession, a May 2009 nationally representative FWI study found that 81 percent of U.S. employers are maintaining and 13 percent are increasing the flexibility they offer. In fact, many report they are using flexibility as a tool to manage through the recession. Bringing that and other trends into tangible focus, Bold New Ideas features 260 award-winning employers from around the country by geography and by innovative practice, allowing readers to search for organizations in their industry or area, or find examples of best practices of effective and flexible workplaces from around the nation. All of the employers are 2008 winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, presented each year through a partnership among FWI, the Institute for a Competitive Workplace and the Twiga Foundation. The award is unique in that applying employers must score in the top 20 percent of employers nationally to be selected as winners and two thirds of the winning score is based on employee experiences as reported through an employee survey.



[WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY: INNOVATION IN ACTION](#)

In 2007, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation funded a working retreat on workplace flexibility, which was proposed and organized by Alliance for Work-Life Progress at WorldatWork. The event brought together two dozen flexibility practitioners from both higher education and private industry to represent a new "think tank" format for the work-life field.

This free publication is a tangible result of this "meeting of the minds." It is designed to provide readers with a rich collection of the resources contributed by retreat participants. It offers testimonies to alleviate organizational concerns, gives facts to counter common but erroneous myths, and presents options for introducing organizational skills that are needed to create a fluid, flexible work environment that delivers the agility required to survive in today's fast-changing economy.

SLOAN WORK AND FAMILY RESEARCH NETWORK, BOSTON COLLEGE

The Alfred P. Sloan Work and Family Research Network is the premier online destination for information about work and family, including workplace flexibility. The Network serves a global community interested in work and family research by providing resources and building knowledge. Current, credible, and comprehensive, the Network targets the information needs of academics and researchers, workplace practitioners, state public policy makers, and interested individuals. It is the place to find high-quality research and reports, case studies, easy-to-read summary sheets and briefs, and work-family topic pages—all in one location.



WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY 2010

Workplace Flexibility 2010 is a research, outreach and consensus-building enterprise located at Georgetown University Law Center. Workplace Flexibility 2010 engages in the following activities:

- **Expands the knowledge base regarding workplace flexibility.** The legal staff of Workforce Flexibility 2010 objectively analyzes ways in which existing laws and practices either hinder or support flexibility. Areas of study include labor, employment, anti-discrimination, tax, and health and benefits.
- **Translates academic research into accessible formats.** The policy staff of Workplace Flexibility 2010 provides policymakers and the media with accessible summaries of quantitative & qualitative research documenting the needs for flexibility and the costs of workplace inflexibility.
- **Engages stakeholders in new creative thinking.** The legal, political, and policy staff of Workplace Flexibility 2010 engage leaders from business, community groups, unions, family groups and other potential stakeholders to help define the contours of a new national policy on workplace flexibility.



Flex-News has been written and developed under a contract with the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau for its Flex-Options project. The Flex-News editorial staff is solely responsible for its content.